



QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project (2025/6) Participant Training

Supporting flexible pathways and effective transitions in college-based HE

April-May 2025

Thank you for volunteering for this innovative, collaborative project!

Plan for today



Overview of the project focus, objectives, outcomes, timescale & participant involvement



Project training/discussions & getting to know each other



Identifying your inquiry topic (in your case study groups)



Signing the consent forms



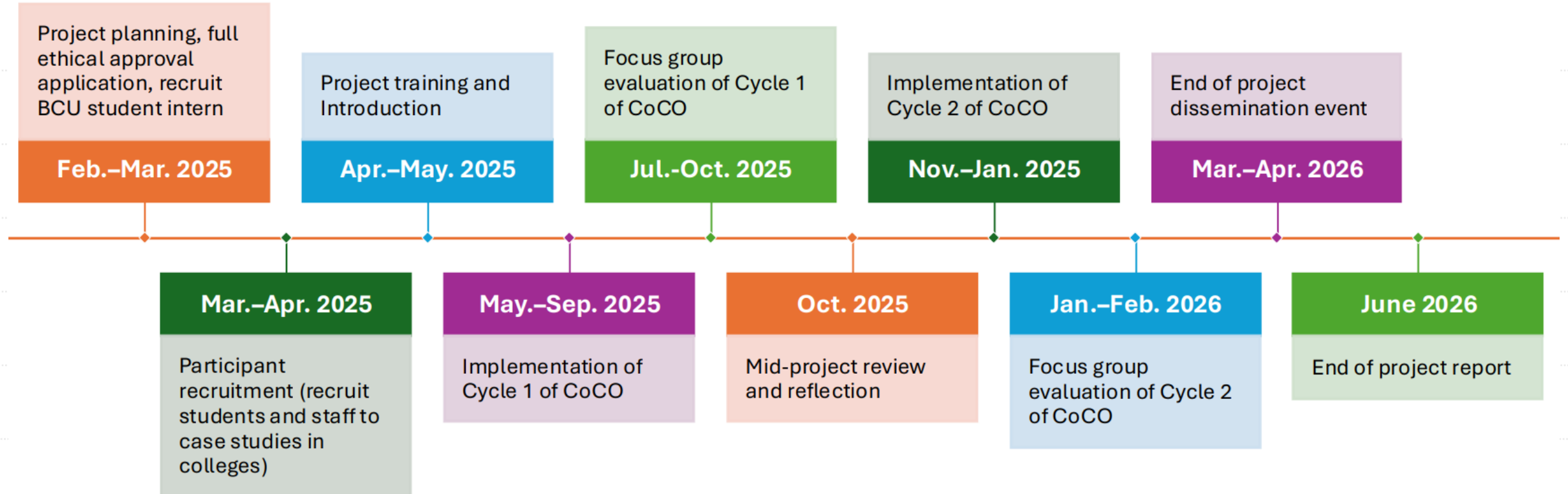
Planning your next steps

The project objectives

- To increase student engagement in shaping their learning experiences by empowering them to become directly involved in informing and improving understanding about supporting their pathways and transitions into college-based HE
- To build students' confidence in transitioning to HE and collaborating with academic staff
- To prepare and train students and staff from 5 Further Education Colleges to work collaboratively to undertake 2 cycles of collaborative observation (CoCO) across 10 different case studies
- To generate an evidence and practice base that will inform and improve college-based HE students' learning experiences in relation to their pathways and transitions into HE



Delivery plan & key milestones



The project outcomes



Project webpage with open-access educational resources that students and educators in college-based HE can use to support their learning and teaching experiences (including a guide and resources to support the training, preparation and implementation of CoCO)



A set of recommendations of pedagogical principles and practices for college-based HE providers, educators, and students



Conference presentations with students and staff (internal and external)



End of project dissemination event with project participants sharing their experiences and findings from the project with the wider QAA membership of FECs



End of project report for QAA



Co-authored journal article with project participants



Activity 1: reflections on your learning journey

This activity focuses on students' self reflection on their learning journey from Level 3 to Level 4

- You will reflect by yourself and note down your answer to each question on Post-it notes
- You will then discuss your reflections with your peers and create your team's learning journey poster on the flip chart paper
- The whole activity will take 40 minutes
- You will then join the teacher participant group to share each team's learning journey



How did you approach your learning at Level 3?

How do you approach your learning now?

What have you enjoyed about learning at Level 4?

What have you found challenging about learning at Level 4?

How do you work with others in your learning at Level 4?

What would you value most as the focus of your transitions work with your tutors in this project?

Activity 2: reflections on supporting your students' transitions into HE study



This activity focuses on your reflections on working with students' transitions from Level 3 to Level 4 study

- You will reflect by yourself and note down your answer to each question on Post-it notes
- You will then discuss your reflections with your peers and create your team's collective poster capturing your experiences of supporting students' transitions on the flip chart paper
- The whole activity will take 40 minutes
- You will then join the student participant group to share each team's learning journeys



What do you think students enjoy most about learning at Level 4?

What do you think students find the most challenging about learning at Level 4?

What are some of the key issues you have noticed about supporting students with their transition from Level 3 to Level 4?

How have you addressed some of these key issues in your teaching/student support?

What do you think your students would value most as the focus of their transitions work with you in this project?

How do you think you can help your students to collaborate with you and each other on this project?

Principles of staff-student collaboration

Discuss in
your case
study
teams

- What do you want to get out of participating in the project?
- What do you think you need to be mindful of when working together as tutors and students?



Principles of staff-student collaboration

What you will be doing:

- Participate in a pre-observation discussion with your tutors
- Sharing your learning experience so far
- Discussing the focus for the observations
- Arranging who will be observing what during which part of the session
- Co-observing 2 of your classes
- Reflecting on what you have observed with each other
- Discussing your observations and reflections with your tutors
- Write a reflective account of your experiences



Principles of staff-student collaboration

What you won't be doing:

- Evaluating or assessing your tutor and/or students' performance
- Focusing your attention solely on your tutor or the 'teaching'
- Using this as a means of gathering student feedback on their course in general
- Using the discussions/reflections as an opportunity to make judgements about your tutor's teaching

Principles of staff-student collaboration



Key ethical considerations

1. Staff-student collaboration includes considering everyone who is involved in the learning environment (**not just the members of the case study team**)
2. Be mindful of **what** you share and **how** you share your reflections amongst your case study team e.g. sharing constructive, critical views about learning and teaching.
3. Be mindful of **what** you share and **how** you share your reflections with those not involved in the project i.e. How will you tell other staff and students about your case study's work? If your observations and reflections involve discussing other people's activities, how will you report it?
4. Be mindful about what you share and how you share your case study team's work with the project team (e.g. Matt, Shaun and Vanessa). The project team will also check what you want to share externally (e.g. on the project website) and what you want to keep just between the case study team and the project team.

Student involvement



Observation training



Pre-observation reflection
and discussions between
academic staff and
students



Observation of your own
taught session



Post-observation
reflection and discussions
between academic staff
and students



Reflective write up of your
experience



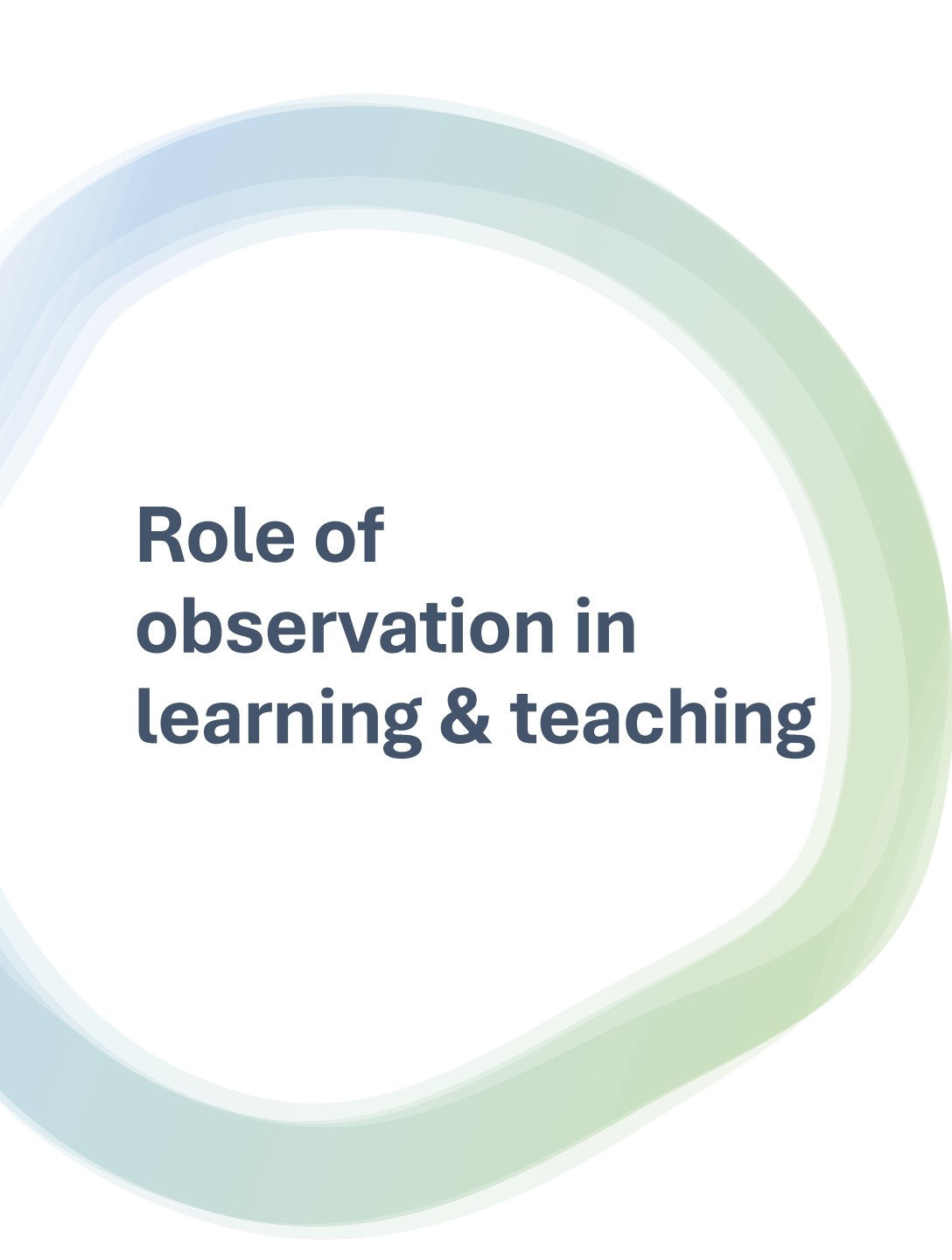
Project evaluation focus
groups/paired interviews



Then same again (second
cycle)



Remember: it's 2 cycles

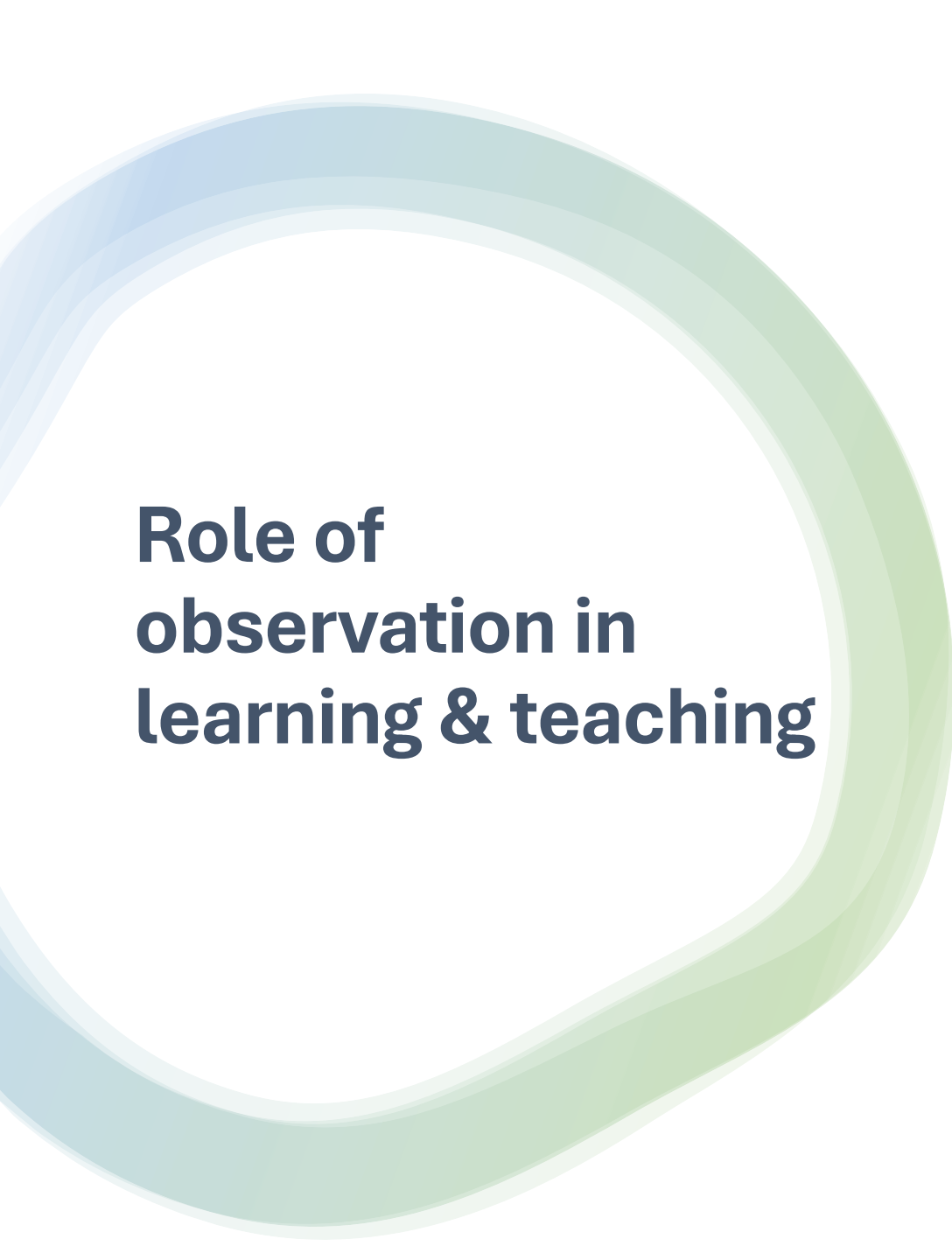


Role of observation in learning & teaching

Activity 3: Use your experience of observing BCU learning spaces during the lunch break.

Taking on the role of observer, we want you to pay attention to the learning environment in the Curzon building. Use the questions to help you to make notes on what you observe.

1. What can you see in the learning spaces?
2. How are the people in the learning spaces interacting with each other?
3. How are they using the spaces, facilities and resources?
4. What words would you use to describe the learning environment that you see?



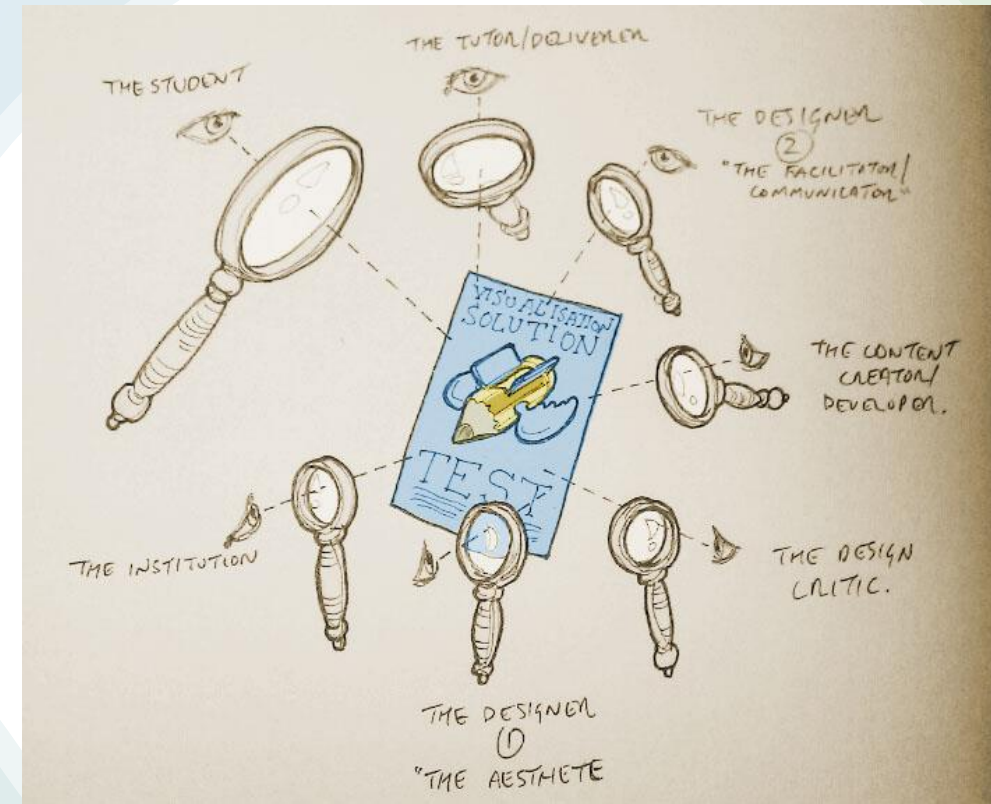
Role of observation in learning & teaching

Activity 3: Use your experience of observing BCU learning spaces during the lunch break.

1. Can you make a list of what you can/can't observe in an educational environment?
2. What did you make notes on? Why did make a note of these things?
3. What's your experience of observing and making notes on learning? What have you found interesting?
4. Did you find anything challenging about observing and making notes on learning?

Observation

- One of the most detailed ways to obtain "real" source material and information (e.g. what took place in a learning space, who was involved, what did the people do, what was in that learning space)
- It can capture the details of instructional activities, interactions, and environments
- Planned observation can accumulate detailed evidence on teaching and learning and provide valuable insights into teaching and learning (pedagogical) practices for students and teachers



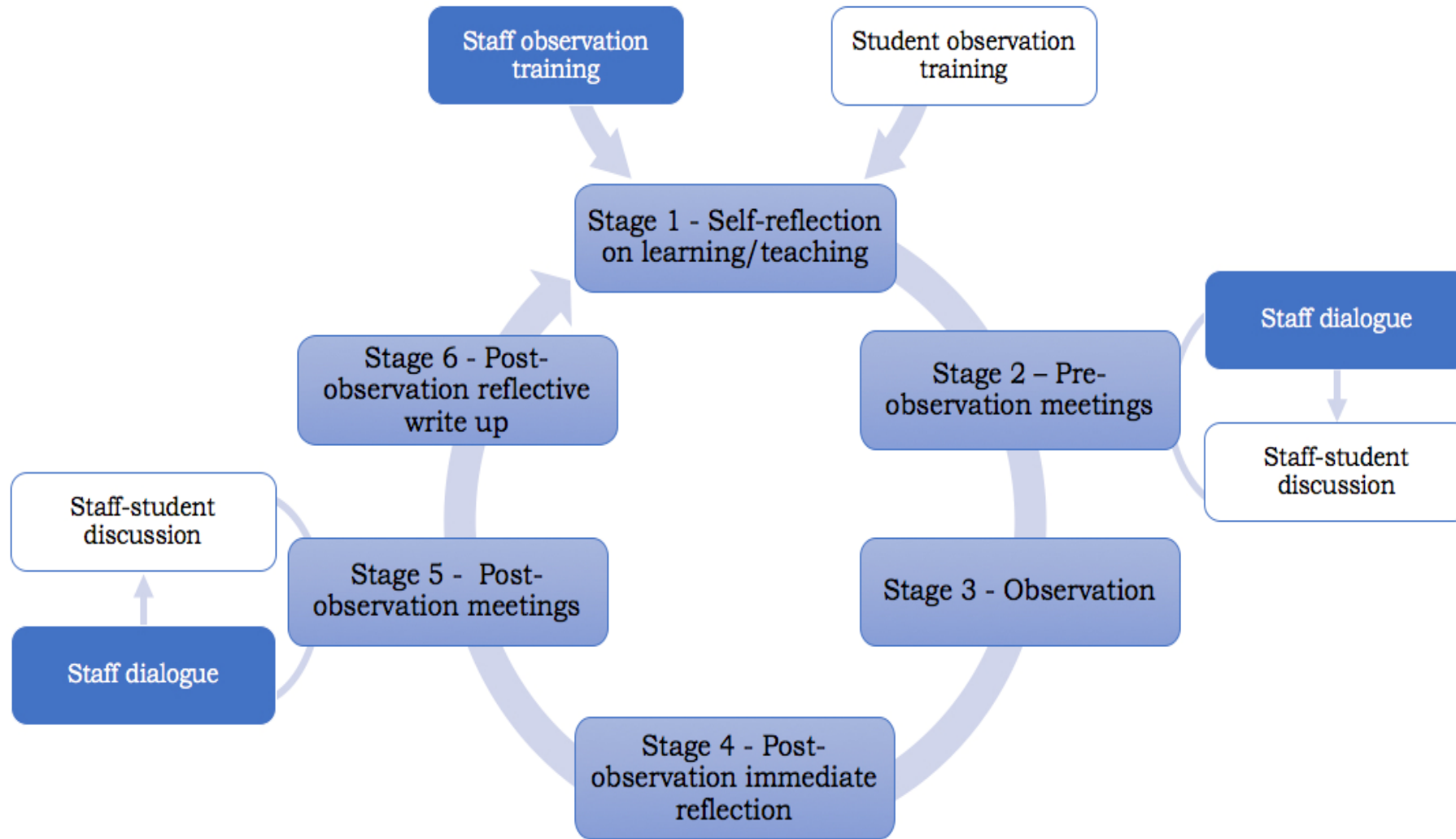


Introducing the Cycle of Collaborative Observation (CoCO)

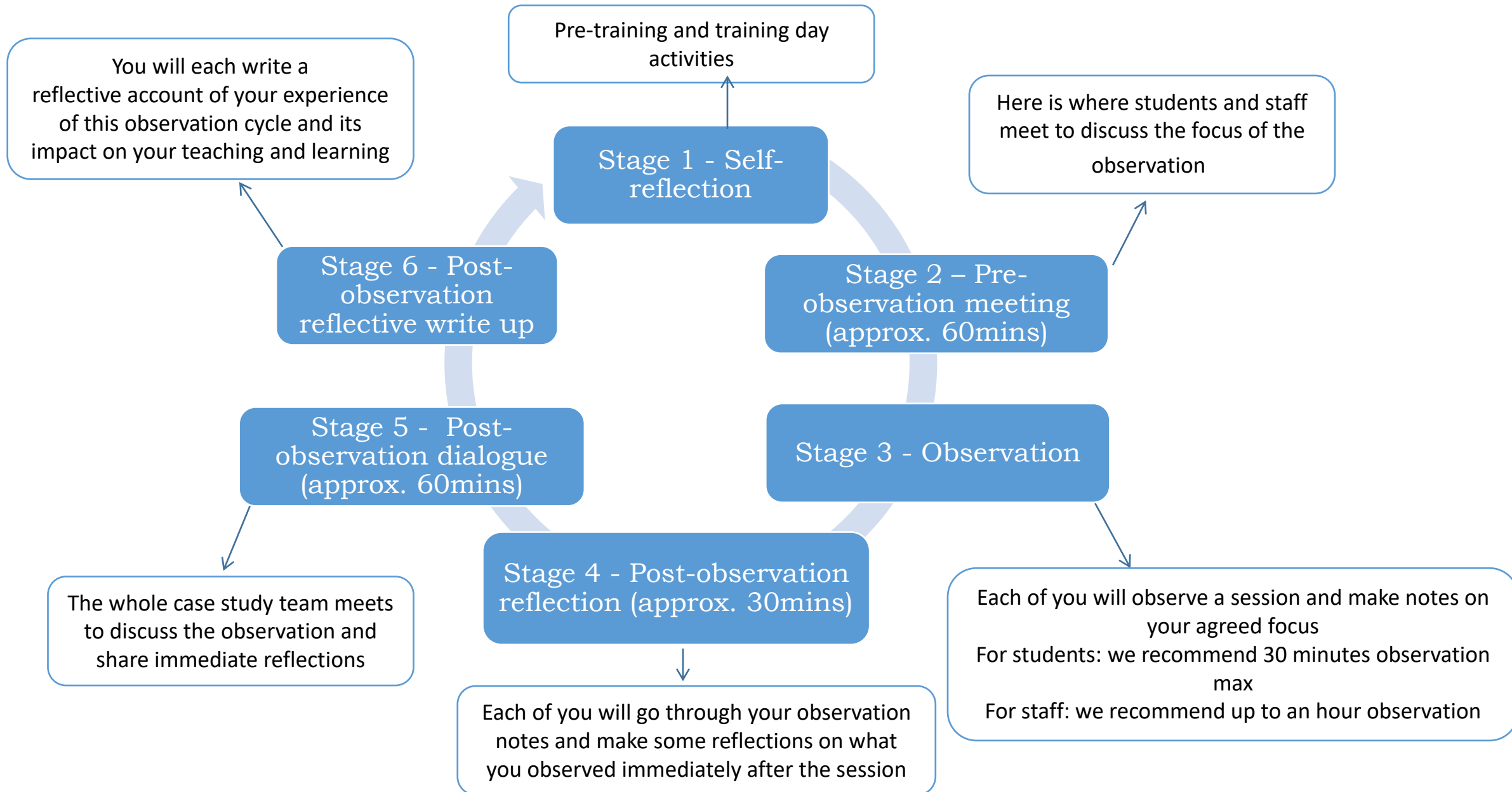
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Cycle of Collaborative Observation (CoCO)



Cycle of Collaborative Observation (CoCO)



Collaborative observation

- **Student pairs observing (negotiated time with member of staff) and also having learning time as normal in your module/ course session**
- **Today you will agree which session/which part**
- **It will be a short period of time (20-30 mins)**
- **It will be focussed on a particular activity/aspect of the session**
- **You choose how you record it**

Pre-Observation meeting



What is it helpful to discuss now in readiness?



What might you want to find out more about?



What key areas/aspects might you want to observe?



How will you have a particular focus e.g. inclusion, belonging, voice?



What questions might you be asking, whilst observing?



What activity/activities might be best to observe?



What planning do you need to do before the observation?

Let's think about this a bit more...



What do you think you will need to be mindful of as an observer?



How will you make notes?



What will you make notes on?



Why might you make notes on those areas? i.e. why might that feel important to you as part of your observation of the teaching and learning experience?



Observing

Supporting flexible pathways and effective transitions in college-based HE



- You can all record differently
- Some possible methods:
 - Notes, drawing, mind map
 - Narrative with timings
 - Identifying points for discussion in line with the pre-agreed focus given by the observer

Cycle of Collaborative Observation – Record of Notes and Reflections

Course/subject:

Focus of observation:

Mode of delivery (in person or online):

Date of observation:

Cycle of Observation stage	Description	Feelings	Analysis/reflection	Concluding thoughts	Follow-up action plan
Before the observation (Stage 2)	- What's the topic/focus of the session? - What will happen during the session? E.g. learning activities, content	- What are your feelings about this topic/focus? - How do you feel about the planned activities?	- What do you expect to find out?	- Decide which part of the session observers will focus on - Agree what each observer will focus on	
During the observation (Stage 3)	- What's happening? - How are the students and their tutor(s) interacting?	- What words would you use to describe the atmosphere? - How do you feel as an observer watching this?	- What have you learnt about your topic/focus from your observation?	- What are the key points/observations you want to share and discuss in Stage 5?	
After the observation (Stage 5)	- Summarise the key points from your observation notes and reflection	- How would you describe your experience of observation?	- Insights from each participants' perspectives - Reflections on staff-student collaborative observation	- What are the key takeaway messages from this observation?	- Experience of this observation on your learning/teaching - Would you do anything differently?



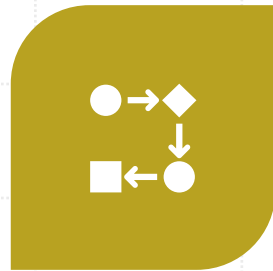
Post-Observation Meeting

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Post-Observation meeting



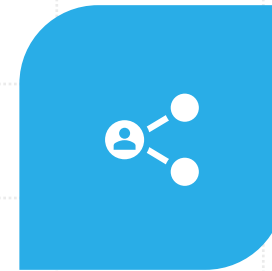
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF
THIS MEETING?



WHAT KINDS OF THINGS
WILL YOU BE DOING?



THIS SHOULD FEEL
MEANINGFUL, AUTHENTIC,
COLLABORATIVE.



WHAT WILL YOU DO TO
SUPPORT THAT?

Stage 6 – Post-Observation Reflective Write-up



What? A post observation reflective write – up



When? After the observation feedback dialogue (Stage 5)



How? Individually, based on your own reflections and notes, see later slides for suggestions



Who will see it? Your case study team members and the researchers involved in the project. With your permission, it might also be shared as part of dissemination i.e. within a collaborative conference presentation or paper.



Who should I send it to? Shaun.Allen-Dooley@bcu.ac.uk

Reflection – what is it?

- Reflection is an active process of observing one's own experience in situ, in order to examine it more closely and more critically.
- Reflection gives meaning to our actions
- Reflection enables us to learn from our experiences
- This can involve both episodic event (e.g. a critical moment in a class) or a longitudinal inquiry (e.g. a period of teaching and learning on a topic).



Modes of reflection

A. Reflection-IN-action	In the moment response/ live/ responding in the now
B. Reflection-ON-practice	Reflection after an event/ historic- but what should I reflect on?
C. Reflection-FOR-action	Reflecting on something specific/ for a reason/ in order to do something positive about it
D. Reflection-WITH-action	Doing something following reflection/ alone or with others

How to write a 'reflective write-up'?



Gather all the notes you've written since you started to be involved in the QAA project.



Read your notes through again and use them as a source of reference.



Think about those experiences of being

in the observation training,
in the pre-observation meeting,
observing or being observed,
in the post observation meeting

Hopes and concerns?

- What do you think you will find most valuable about this experience?
- What are you hoping to learn?
- What are you most looking forward to?
- What are you most concerned about?



- Agree a focus and your key questions
 - Agree how you will do this together
 - Agree the way you will record what you see, together
 - Be ready to agree a date and time for Cycle 1 observation and Stage 2 and Stage 5 meetings
 - Note down your reflections during and immediately after the lesson
 - Write up your reflections
-
- ```
graph TD; S1[Stage 1 - Agree focus and key questions] --> S2[Stage 2 - Agree how to do it together]; S2 --> S3[Stage 3 - Agree the way you will record what you see, together]; S3 --> S4[Stage 4 - Post-observation immediate reflection]; S4 --> S5[Stage 5 - Write up your reflections]; S5 --> S1;
```

